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THE JUNIOR COLLEGE CHAIRMAN.

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THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IMPLIES A SHIFT IN THE AMERICAN COLLEGE SCENE AND A RECONSIDERATION OF WHAT A COLLEGE SHOULD DO FOR ITS STUDENTS. "TEN POSTULATES" RELEVANT TO THE CONDUCTING OF A TWO-YEAR COLLEGE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AND NINE CONCOMITANT RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN ARE LISTED. A CRITICAL ISSUE RESULTING FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DUAL POSITION AS ADMINISTRATOR AND ADVOCATOR OF THE DISCIPLINE OF ENGLISH IS DISCUSSED. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN "THE ADE BULLETIN," NUMBER 17, MAY 1968, PAGES 14-17. (BN)

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The Junior College Chairman

by Richard Worthen, Diablo Valley College

All revolutions are interior
The displacement of spirit
By the arrival of fact.

This statement on the two-year college English Department and the role of its chairman is based upon my observations of the development of one department in a two-year college that built stable procedures and a philosophy, then expanded at such a rate that the problem of coherence and rationality of development is annually an acute one. It is also based upon a sampling of opinions of colleagues both within my own institution and from institutions across the nation. Part of my confidence in the validity of some of these observations is traceable to statements, inferences and indirections that came through in conversations with numbers of two-year college English teachers during my year as a member of the staff of the NCTE responsible for helping to develop a national organization for two-year college English instructors.

The statistic that is put before two-year college conference participants, now to the point of weariness no doubt, is that one new two-year college per week will be created in the U.S. for the next decade. It is a stunning fact. But it seems to me that the really jolting implications of that fact are seldom recognized. It implies a great shift in the college scene in the U.S. and a reconsideration of the question "What is College?" In my own state, California, those four-year and university colleagues are hard pressed who would preserve an older, genteel view of college as a place where those who choose have found the means come to be civilized and professionalized. While college will continue to serve these purposes, it is clear that it must do much more in the future. It has to learn to serve a much greater portion of the community and still somehow preserve its function of generating both knowledge and civilized attitudes for the society.

In this view, the two-year college for some time to come is destined to be the pressure cooker of the changing American democracy. It can no longer see itself neatly and simply as serving two kinds of people who come to it because it is convenient and cheap; the academic and the vocational student--the latter the handminded as one educator has disposed of them.

In the long run, despite the present urgency to provide immediate vocational outlets for the alienated of our ghettoes, we will be coming to terms with other patterns inherent in an automated society. We will have to educate--literally educate--all of our citizens and they will need to cultivate personal resources for living in such a society. Of course no one institution can shoulder a national problem of such magnitude. We are called upon to make a concerted effort throughout the educational system with perhaps the greatest adjustments to be made at the college level. This points up the need for openness, communication and the recognition of interrelatedness, a disconcerting fact for those advocates of the genteel approach to the college experience.

In the meantime, I would speculate that the burden may fall first on the pre-school educators--charged with inducting experience-impoverished children into the reading, writing, thinking process--and the two-year college quality performance. Even though we in the two-year college do not know how to do this well we must recognize that some of our two-year colleges can do it better than the colleges generally have done in the past and that we must all learn to do it better--since we cannot in the face of contemporary conditions do less.

So much for a preface. I would like to list some "postulates" relevant to the conducting

of a two-year college English Department and then list concomitant duties, privileges and responsibilities of a department chairman:

I. Our society is increasingly shaped by new knowledge; one result of this process has been an increase of leisure and an erosion of older values based narrowly on work.

II. In such a society, both the humanities and a knowledge of the nature of language and the symbolic process are vital to developing an awareness of the shape of contemporary reality. The functions of art were never more essential.

III. The two-year college has the function of inducting many kinds of adults--young and old--into the college experience.

IV. The term "college experience" needs to be seen essentially as the commitment of self to learning, to wholehearted engagement with ideas and skill acquisition. This emphasis has inherent priorities in the two-year college concept which are entirely defensible as long as the transfer function is dealt with honestly.

V. A college-wide climate calculated to elicit such engagement is paramount.

VI. The English Department is at the heart of the induction function, and its climate is of greatest importance. The sense of the English Department's preserving an honest allegiance to both a discipline and a total institutional philosophy is in need of far more discussion and cultivation.

VII. The teaching of English must be more humane, democratic, and inclusive; and the two-year college must develop its own unique kind of academic rigor. Its function is neither that of emulating the nearest state college or university nor that of custodian of all wayward persons over 18 years old.

VIII. In one sense the two-year college wants to make a registrant into a student and acquaint him with some of the values of a scholar, whereas the four-year college assumes it has registered a student and tries to launch him as a scholar and a professional. Though the four-year college, too, cannot ignore problems of motivation, there is a difference in emphasis.

IX. To meet the problem of motivation and direction, a workable program for the two-year college is probably more complex in format, more psychologically oriented, and more ambiguous; hence it demands of its instructors more tolerance of ambiguity. In this context, English must be directed toward the whole person, not to some vocational abstraction; the less tracking and fragmented "remediation" it has to resort to, the more likely the program is to accomplish its goals.

X. The discipline of English has its own unique message for all persons; it should not become a servant of another discipline or some vocation.

All this implies that the old forms and arrangements borrowed from the universities may not serve the two-year college English Department well enough. Increasingly the departments will be taking in more ex-high school teachers and young graduate students. Neither are by previous experience well prepared to cope with the new assignment. Thus the chairman has a critical role in building a department. It involves: